



**COMMITTEE ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE**  
**Minutes of Meeting, April 8, 2009**

Members: Joseph Briody, Bruce Clouette, Joan Fried, Steve Rhodes, Dana White  
Staff: Mike Ninteau, Matthew Hart, Kevin Grunwald, Gregory Padick, Jim Hintz

J. Briody was chosen to chair the meeting. Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m.  
B. Clouette was chosen to serve as Recording Secretary.

The minutes of the February 12, 2009 meeting were approved without change.

**PUBLIC COMMENT - I**

Two members of the public were present; neither chose to speak at this point.

**AGENDA**

Members and staff discussed the committee's agenda. K. Grunwald informed the committee that an ordinance was being studied that would provide for some town regulation of businesses serving or selling alcohol, and asked if the committee would like to have a chance to review it. M. Ninteau noted that there were at least five other pending items. The consensus was that the committee would receive the draft ordinance by email, when it was ready, and would then prioritize discussion of it along with all other pending items. J. Fried asked that the committee spend more time discussing behavior rather than definitions of family.

**STAFF REPORT**

M. Hart updated the committee on the status of the proposed changes to the public safety ordinance. He noted that in the public comment process, objections were registered both by some tenants and by some landlords. The town attorney was researching further the question of whether the town could, as the ordinance change proposed, hold landlords responsible for the need to respond repeatedly to disturbances on their property. J. Fried noted that many owners of student rental properties were participating constructively in the Campus Community Partnership discussions. S. Rhodes noted the difficulty of enforcing lease provisions. J. Briody cited examples from other areas where it was common to restrict access to property and wondered whether property owners' allowing unrestricted access to apartment complexes in Mansfield was reasonable. J. Hintz's opinion was that the various apartment complexes had historical identities that, in part, explained why residents of some complexes chose to live there. M. Hart said he thought that the issue of revising the ordinance could be resolved before the beginning of the next academic year.

**ACTION ITEM: HOUSING CODE AMENDMENT**

S. Rhodes moved, seconded by B. Clouette, that the committee endorse changing the frequency of septic-tank servicing from two years to four years. M. Ninteanu noted that, in addition to that requirement, the housing code provided general language regarding an functioning system for handling waste. The committee continued the discussion of the water-test requirement. B. Clouette questioned whether water testing was in fact effective, given the recent experience with contamination at a property that had monthly testing. S. Rhodes said that the water-testing requirement was necessary in light of local government's responsibility to maintain public health. In response to a committee member's question, member of the public Christopher Kueffner questioned whether a test that was less expensive than a certified test might be used. J. Fried asked for more evidence on the effectiveness of water testing, and M. Ninteanu said staff would research and report. The consensus was that the septic-tank change should be implemented at this time, but that the water-test needed more consideration and would be kept as a pending item. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### ACTION ITEM: REVIEW MANSFIELD 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

M. Hart reviewed the strategic planning process with the committee. The Town Council will approve an implementation strategy after the Town Manager consults with various existing committees regarding points in the plan that would seem relevant to their respective missions. This committee reviewed three possible points:

- 1: Working with the University to have more students housed on campus
- 2: Promoting neighborhoods
- 3: Encouraging affordable housing

On the first point, S. Rhodes reported that the University was housing 400 more students this year through reconfiguration of existing buildings, and it may be that an additional 200 could be accommodated, but there were no plans to build additional on-campus housing. He noted that the University houses a very high percentage of students as it is. J. Fried asked if additional increases in the student body were anticipated. S. Rhodes distinguished between policy decisions regarding increased numbers of students (none on the horizon) and unavoidable glitches resulting from attempts to predict the number of accepted students who will actually choose to come to UConn. The consensus was that this was an issue of interest to the committee, and that we will follow developments related to this issue, but that it would not be a Strategic Plan action item that the committee would be the most appropriate to undertake. Other entities—Town-Gown, Community Campus Partnership—might be more appropriate.

The consensus was that the second point—neighborhood preservation—was exactly in line with the charge of this committee. The committee asked that the Council consider assigning development of this Strategic Plan action item to the committee. The committee will use the Strategic Plan in carrying forward its mission.

On the third point, the committee agreed that the affordable housing issue was relevant, but that we should prioritize our work to concentrate on the second point, neighborhood issues. K. Grunwald reported that the Housing Authority and Social Services were

discussing setting up a task force on the issue of affordable housing. J. Fried commented that any consideration of this issue should take in neighboring towns, especially Windham.

#### MINUTES PROCEDURE

The consensus was that February minutes as prepared by D. White were very well done and provided an appropriate level of detail.

#### MEETING SCHEDULE/NEXT STEPS

It was agreed that the committee would meet at 7:30 p.m. the first Thursday of each month, place of meeting to be determined. Future agenda items will include ways to control parking, water testing, and the possibility of a local alcohol ordinance.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT - II

Christopher Kueffner applauded the “bookend” public comment procedure and offered a number of observations:

- There is a need for an objective approach to water testing that supplements the advocacy approach of public-health officials.
- Perhaps there is a way to specify the septic-tank requirement in a way that allows inspectors to take into account the individual circumstances of each property.
- There is a need to better integrate off-campus students into the life of the community, especially graduate students.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.